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ABSTRACT

This unit is intended for secondary students in American literature, Asian history, U.S. history, or a world cultures class. Special emphasis is placed on the literary contributions of four individuals: Henry David Thoreau, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Dalai Lama. The sections appear in chronological order and contain objectives and strategies that are designed to vary the materials the students use in their daily activities. Study questions and suggested evaluation tools are also included. Background is included in the head notes of each section with primary and secondary sources listed in each section's bibliography. The unit is designed for four weeks, but can be adapted to fit classroom needs. (EH)

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by

Rosalie Gendimenico

Paul Ragan

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October 15, 1997

Mr. O.P. Bhardwaj
United States Educational Foundation in India
Fulbright House
12 Hailey Road
New Delhi 110 001, INDIA

Dear O.P.,

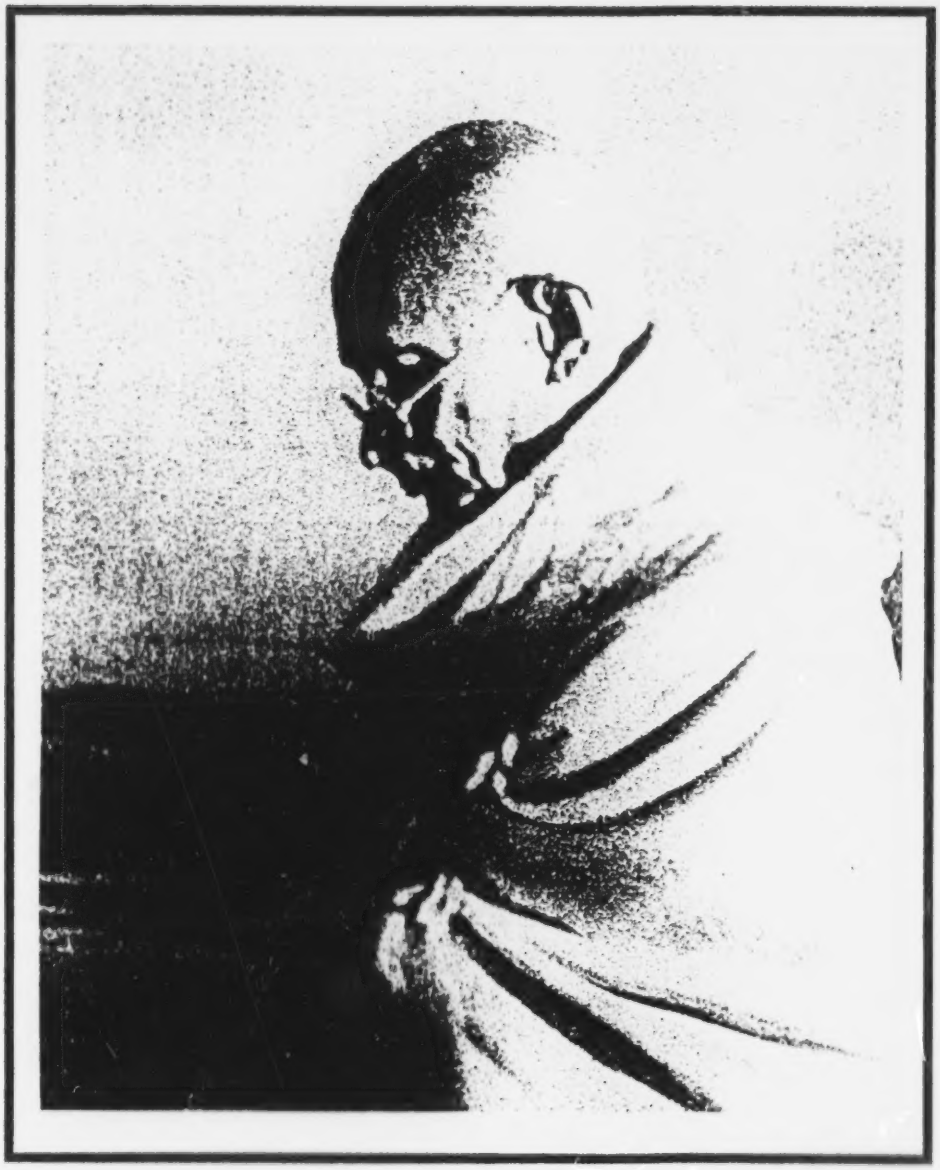
Here at last is my curriculum project, something I am really quite proud of. I have just completed a unit in which I actually used it, and the students responded with enthusiasm and insight. Having spent time in Delhi and visited so many of the spots associated with Gandhi really made the project come alive for me, and I was able to communicate a great deal of that enthusiasm to the classes.

I hope others find it both useful and adaptable.

Please give my best regards to everyone at Fulbright House, and if you don't mind acknowledge your receipt of this project by e-Mail.

Sincerely yours,

Paul Ragan
"Understanding India & Her Ethos"



GANDHI:
SOURCES AND INFLUENCES
A Curriculum Guide

GANDHI: SOURCES AND INFLUENCES

A Curriculum Guide

Paul Ragan, Hammond School

Introduction

The life and legacy of Mohandas K. Gandhi is of intense and continuing interest in the United States. Gandhi's image is everywhere, from film and documentary to advertising: the October 13, 1997, issue of The New Yorker magazine has as its back cover a full-page image of the mahatma as part of Apple Computer's new "Think Different" campaign. And the advertising designers knew what they were doing: Gandhi indeed thought differently. Outraged as Gandhi would no doubt be at his image used to promote a central vehicle of the technological age, which he so distrusted and fought against, he would also perhaps be flattered at his name being recalled among those individuals of the twentieth century who forged new paths, fought against established traditions and routines, brought about revolution and ultimately improved the lot of millions of people.

Yet Gandhi did not exist in a vacuum, either intellectually or politically, nor was his impact limited to the country of his birth, India. He was profoundly influenced intellectually by several Western thinkers, including prominently the American Transcendentalist Henry David Thoreau, whose essays Tolstoy advised Gandhi to read. Gandhi freely acknowledged his indebtedness to Thoreau's "Life Without Purpose." He seemed less willing to reveal what his political thinking owed to Thoreau's "Resistance to Civil Government," in part perhaps because he needed to assert the roots of the Indian independence movement in India herself. Nevertheless, Thoreau's presence is demonstrable in Gandhi's political thinking, as well in as his opinions about modern technology and its impact upon traditional lifestyles and cultures.

Gandhi's influence did not end with his assassination on January 30, 1948. Many prominent political and religious leaders outside India owe tremendous debts to Gandhi's writings and to the example he set in his nonviolent campaigns to oust the British Raj. People as varied as Mother Teresa, the liberation theologians and leaders of revolutions in South and Central America, and the recent victims of China's Tienaman Square massacre held Gandhi in high esteem. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., chief architect of the movement to obtain civil rights legislation in favor of African-Americans in the United States during the nineteen fifties and sixties cited Gandhi's writings frequently in his own work. And His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet has drawn close parallels to Gandhi's example in his efforts to bring his native land to

independence from the brutal (some would say genocidal) Chinese occupation.

Clearly then, Gandhi's life, his writings, and his example are very much worthy of careful examination in America's secondary schools and colleges. The following curriculum unit is intended for use among secondary school students studying world cultures, Asian history, American history, or American literature, which I teach, and for which I have specifically tailored it. There is, therefore a special emphasis on the literary contributions of the four figures involved, Thoreau, Gandhi, King, and the Dalai Lama. The unit can be shortened by simply eliminating either of the later sections. (The Dalai Lama section is designed specifically to examine Gandhi's continuing influence on contemporary politics and because of the current attention to the plight of the Tibetan people. It is perhaps the most specifically political section, and hence the least which bears upon literary issues.)

The sections appear in chronological order and contain objectives, strategies designed to vary the materials the students will use and their classroom activities, study questions, and suggested tools for evaluation. (Since evaluation instruments are highly personal and closely related both to the methods of classroom instruction and the academic level of the students, these suggestions are very general.) Background is included in the headnotes of each section, and primary and secondary sources to be included are listed in each section's bibliography. The published sources are not meant to be exhaustive, certainly, and many of the materials are available in a number of editions and collections of essays. Many supplemental biographies and historical studies are available as well. Since the unit concerning the plight of Tibet presents events continuing in the present day, current periodicals and journals will provide training for students in locating and documenting recent sources.

The unit is designed to occupy approximately four weeks in duration, though it could easily be truncated or expanded depending upon the discipline in which it is employed, the emphasis placed upon individual figures, and the nature of activities used in presenting materials. Many excellent opportunities for individual student projects and presentations are possible, along with topics for longer-range research projects.

Gandhi's presence looms large in the twentieth century, and as this century so marked by violence and inhumanity draws to its close, students seem drawn naturally to his compelling example. My experience shows that the motivation for this unit among students is high, and that the rewards are great. I trust that my colleagues will have a similar success.

Paul Ragan
October 15, 1997

SECTION I
THOREAU

Thoreau: "Civil Disobedience"

Henry David Thoreau delivered his essay which has become famous as "Civil Disobedience" as a lecture in 1848 and 1849, and it was published in 1849 under the title "Resistance to Civil Government." It is certainly one of the most influential political essays published in the United States, having an impact upon Gandhi, King, and a variety of other leaders in the twentieth century. Gandhi acknowledged a debt to Thoreau's essay "Life Without Purpose" as well, but the unit focuses primarily upon the political impact of Thoreau upon Gandhi's struggles to obtain Indian independence.

Students find reading Thoreau very challenging, and often they need some guidance in getting started. The central ideas of Transcendental thought can be useful in defining what Thoreau means by "conscience" (indeed, some teachers may wish to have students begin the unit with Emerson's essays "Self-Reliance" or "The Oversoul," especially if the unit is being used in an American history or literature class). Also, background reading on the Mexican American War, to which Thoreau took such objection, and the Abolitionist movement in which Thoreau was active as a polemicist may be assigned. (The bibliography does not include such assignments specifically, since they are widely available. Generally, I find that assignments can be made from my students' American history textbook, since they study American history and American literature during the same year at my school.)

The passages of the essay which describe the night Thoreau spent in jail are a good deal easier and more quickly paced. Some teachers may prefer to assign only those portions of the essay and address Thoreau's political philosophy through lectures, videotapes, and class discussions rather than having students struggle with the full text for themselves.

Though approaches may vary widely, depending upon the intellectual level of the students and their levels of maturity, emphasis should be placed upon Thoreau's concern for the primacy of the individual conscience over the state, upon his concept of reactions to unjust laws, and upon his personal example of civil disobedience, since these are areas which directly affect how this portion of the unit relates to those later on, particularly the study of Gandhi's civil disobedience campaigns.

STRATEGIES

Have students read background sources on the Mexican American War and on the Abolitionist Movement in New England during the early decades of the nineteenth century. Discuss these issues from the perspective of contemporary political ideas of the limits of the government and its influence on smaller nations and upon issues of morality. (Topics such as capital punishment, abortion, and the justification of American involvement in Central America, the Persian Gulf, and Bosnia might be introduced, depending upon the discipline involved and the students' awareness of these issues.)

Assign Thoreau's "Resistance to Civil Government," entirely or in part. Discuss the political and moral implications of Thoreau's ideas and of his example of civil disobedience. Where possible, relate that example to contemporary civil disobedience campaigns by individuals concerned with nuclear proliferation, abortion, animal rights, or environmental preservation.

Have students research examples of such civil disobedience campaigns currently prominent and make class presentations on these campaigns. The Tienaman Square uprising can be the focus of particular research, since many of the participants referred to Thoreau's essay in interviews and in their writings both during and after the campaign. (Elements of the long struggle against apartheid in South Africa may also be instructive.) Students can debate whether Thoreau sufficiently accounted for violent reactions to individual demonstrations of civil disobedience, since he was subject to no threat of violence in his own example.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. To what extent was the Mexican American War justified? What were the reasons it was fought? What were its consequences?

2. What were the goals of the New England abolitionists? What were their motivations? What was the impact of the abolitionist movement upon Thoreau as a political thinker? As a political activist?

3. Examine Thoreau's adaptation of Thomas Jefferson's adage to "That government is best which governs not at all." Is this a practical idea?

4. How does Thoreau define the unjust law? How does he argue that the individual of conscience should react to such laws? What would be the result if many people adapted Thoreau's ideas?

5. What is Thoreau's opinion of voting? Of majority rule? What do these ideas imply about his opinion of democracy? Of the American government during his time?

6. Describe Thoreau's experience of jail. How does the jail itself acquire symbolic significance within the essay? How does it define the differences between Thoreau and his neighbors? How does it reveal Thoreau's ideas about human freedom?

7. How did Thoreau react to his release from jail? What did he do when released? Do his actions undercut the validity of his ideas? Of his example of civil resistance?

8. What was the impact of "Resistance to Civil Government" during Thoreau's lifetime? Did anyone follow his example? Were the laws or actions of the government affected in any way?

9. How has Thoreau's example inspired political activists in recent decades? Examine several campaigns which involve civil disobedience and speculate about their indebtedness to Thoreau.

EVALUATION

Any number of evaluation instruments may be designed to measure the students' success in wrestling with Thoreau's life and essay. First, the nature of their participation in class discussions of the above questions will reveal their level of understanding of the political principles and of the historical context. Their understanding of the essay itself could be measured by daily quizzes on their reading or a larger unit text which reveals their mastery of factual material and abstract concepts.

This portion of the unit could spawn numerous engaging writing topics. Students could be assigned to examine the structure of the essay, its use of allusions, its reliance upon the moral foundation of the Christian church and upon Transcendental thought, its symbolism, its definitions of such terms as <u>government</u>, <u>conscience</u>, and <u>freedom</u>.

Interesting presentations, debates, or essays could also address the question of how Thoreau would react to prominent recent examples of civil disobedience, from activists who free animals from laboratories to terrorist campaigns in many regions of the world. Students should be asked specifically to evaluate what Thoreau would think about the use of force or violence in such campaigns. Individual presentations would be an excellent method of addressing these issues, and either writing assignments or the resulting discussion would be useful in evaluating their effectiveness.

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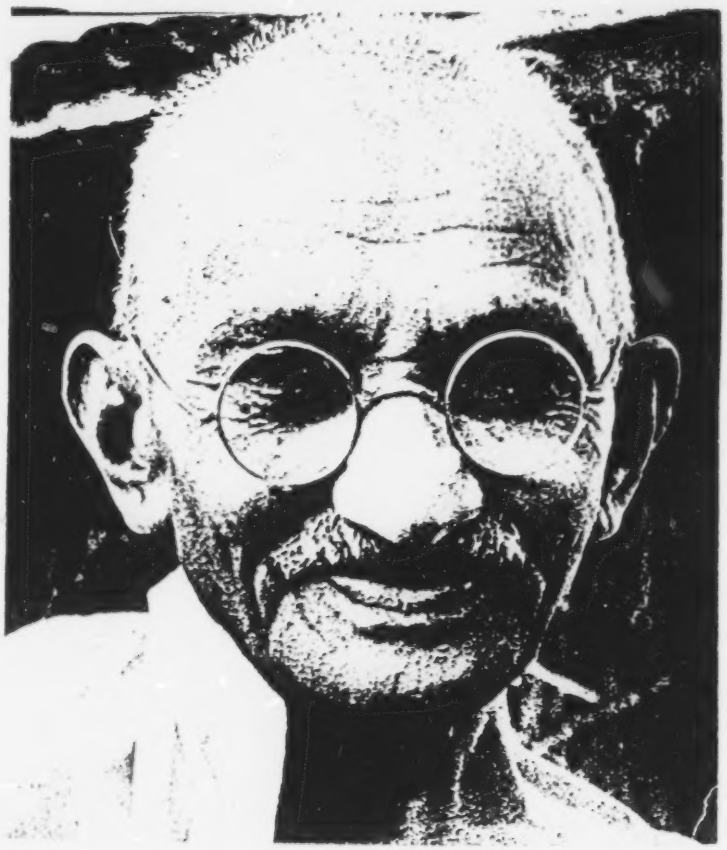
Note: Contemporary examples of civil disobedience campaigns may be found in a variety of periodicals and newspapers. The Internet is also a fertile source of materials which could be used to document modern adaptations of Thoreau's principles. Any textbook concerning American history will include information about the Mexican American War, the Abolitionist Movement, and the contemporary events and legislators Thoreau refers to in "Resistance to Civil Government."



SECTION II
GANDHI

GANDHI: "Passive Resistance"

Certainly the most successful application of Thoreau's ideas in the twentieth century was that of Mohandas K. Gandhi, initially to secure civil rights to Indian immigrants in South Africa and later to secure Indian independence from Great Britain. Thoreau was one of the important political influences on Gandhi's early thinking, a fact which has been recognized by several of his biographers.

A difficulty in approaching Gandhi results from the massive amount of material--both Gandhi's own writings and those about him, not to mention considerations on film. Students should be made aware of the cautions necessary in approaching study of Gandhi's life and relevance to contemporary civil-disobedience campaigns: Gandhi's meaning and relevance have been appropriated by a large number of individuals, both in India and in other countries. In many cases these individuals have perverted Gandhi's own ideas for their own purposes, and India's own political leaders since independence have largely ignored the directions he set out for India's development once the British had been ousted. Thus, the historical context of his life and writings must be examined carefully, and balanced accounts of his life and his relevance must be sought out. Many sources over-simplify Gandhi's life and philosophy and romanticize his example. Many biographies are little more than hagiographies, particularly those designed for young people. While discovering the truth about this complex political leader, admired as a spiritual figure by many millions around the world, students can acquire valuable training in evaluation of sources, separation of fact from legend, and tracing political ideas through changing historical contexts.

The view of Gandhi inherited by today's students has been heavily influenced by Sir Richard Attenborough's filmed biography of him, released in 1982. This celebrated film comprises an important part of the unit. Students are encouraged to examine its "truth," both factually on particular elements of his personality, and its larger depiction of Gandhi's personality and impact upon his fellow countrymen. In evaluating Attenborough's portrait, students will take into account both primary and secondary sources. As much as possible, emphasis should be placed upon Gandhi's own writings, though for purposes of overview and historical context (and recognizing that Gandhi's collected writings comprise over thirty published volumes), selected collections of Gandhi's writings and influential studies of his life and impact upon India will have to be consulted.

The focus will be particularly Gandhi's ideas about civil disobedience, just and unjust laws, and the relationship between the individual conscience and the government, since these are the areas in which Thoreau influenced his thinking and in which Gandhi's example has been followed by later leaders, such as King and the Dalai Lama.

STRATEGIES

Students should begin by researching Thoreau's influence upon Gandhi's thinking and writing. Scholarly biographies may be of use as secondary sources, but a more engaging approach would be for students to read Gandhi's writings and look for passages which reveal the impact of Thoreau's essay. As an individual project, students could read Satyagraha in South Africa or longer portions of Gandhi's Autobiography. As a more practical assignment, though, Hind Swaraj, or Indian Home Rule could be used. Should time not allow assigning the entirety of this little book, the chapter entitled "Passive Resistance" will suffice. (The book as a whole would provide connections between Thoreau's lifestyle and opinions of technology and Gandhi's opinion of particularly Western technology and lifestyles upon India's struggles for independence.)

Students should examine first the similarities between Thoreau and Gandhi, particularly the emphasis upon individual conscience, just and unjust laws, and the individual's responsibility in reacting to the injustices of the government. Discussions of these issues should follow background lectures and readings of relevant passages from both writers.

Following careful consideration of similarities in thinking, the differences between Thoreau and Gandhi must also be explored. These include Gandhi's emphasis upon ahimsa, the principle of non-violence, as well as upon chastity, poverty, and fearlessness in the training of the satyagrahi. Students should discuss the different audiences for which "Resistance to Civil Government" and Hind Swaraj were intended, and the differences in their historical contexts. Such discussions could lead to examinations of the differences in the literary qualities of the two works, their structures and styles.

Acquaintance with Hind Swaraj and the concepts of ahimsa and satyagraha could be used to introduce a larger consideration of Gandhi's political impact upon South Africa and India during his lifetime. At this point, students should view both Attenborough's film and documentary footage of Gandhi's life (widely available in many formats). At this point, the idea of the hagiography should be introduced. Groups of students should be assigned to evaluate various biographies of Gandhi, from the adoring studies which emphasize his personal piety and example to the complex psychological treatments, such as Erik Erikson's biography. Many illustrated biographies are also widely available.

In order to highlight the differences in these accounts, students may be assigned to investigate how each handles particular subjects, such as the Salt March to Dandi in 1930, Gandhi's relationship with his wife and children, or his taking the vows of the brahmacharya in his later years. Differences in treatment of these issues (including how Attenborough's Gandhi addresses them)

will highlight the wide variety of opinions of Gandhi's life and of the relevance of his activity in securing Indian independence.

A confrontational approach to the film and the issue of idealized portraits of Gandhi could may be used by having students read Richard Greiner's review of the Attenborough film published in Commentary. Students should research the individual attacks Greiner levels at the film and decide the validity of each criticism based upon Gandhi's own accounts and those of his biographers. (Many of the more scholarly biographies of course rely heavily upon Gandhi's own writings and quote from them liberally.)

Since Thoreau's influence upon Gandhi's campaign is primarily intellectual and political and since Gandhi's significance rests primarily upon his impact upon the country he helped to free, the unit should close with an investigation of how Gandhi's ideas are seen in India today. In my class I show slides of my recent trip to India and to the Gandhi sites around New Delhi, including Birla House, the place where Gandhi conducted his last fast and the location of his assassination, the Gandhi museum, which displays many of his personal artifacts, including the dhoti he was wearing when he was shot and one of the bullets which killed him, and the Raj Ghat, where his body was cremated. (For those instructors who do not have such personal accessories, these photographs may be found in many of the illustrated biographies and in documentary footage.) The extreme veneration accorded Gandhi in modern India is revealed in the reactions of Indian visitors to these sites and in the impact of Gandhi's life upon students in India. I also show slides of student skits of important events in Gandhi's life I took in Cochin and of the many monuments to Gandhi's memory and roads named in his honor throughout India.

Historical accounts of Gandhi's impact upon post-independence India should also be investigated, so that students may examine how the direction chosen for India by Nehru and later prime ministers has departed from that Gandhi had originally advocated, beginning with the issue of partition.

Once again, particular issues can be assigned to be investigated, such as industrialization, education, the caste system, Hindu-Moslem relations, untouchability, the status of women, etc. In each case, students should compare Gandhi's ideas on these subjects with their status in modern Indian culture. Once again, contemporary assessments (many published to help commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Indian independence during the summer of 1997) should be used to give students modern viewpoints.

The following questions merely address salient issues in this crucial section of the unit; clearly the nature and extent of the investigations may be adapted to individual requirements, emphases, and periods of time available for this portion of the study.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Define the terms ahimsa, satyagraha, and "passive resistance," as Gandhi uses them through citing specific passages in his writings.

2. What traces of Thoreau's influence may be located in Gandhi's writings about just and unjust laws in Hind Swaraj, particularly in the chapter entitled "Passive Resistance"?

3. In what areas are Gandhi's emphases different from Thoreau's? Examine these differences in terms of the differing historical circumstances between the two writers and their differing intended audiences.

4. Examine the impact Gandhi had upon the campaign to secure civil rights for Indian immigrants in South Africa. What dimensions of his writing and of his example contributed to the success of the campaign?

5. After viewing documentary footage of Gandhi's life, examine the symbolism of his dress at different periods of his career and of his lifestyle in India. Can any of Gandhi's decisions regarding lifestyle be traced to Thoreau's experiments with living at Walden Pond? How did his use of symbolism contribute to his growing moral stature?

7. Define the term "hagiography." Compare and contrast different accounts of Gandhi's life. How may the differences in emphasis be explained? Which accounts are most reliable? Why?

8. After viewing Richard Attenborough's film Gandhi, examine the historical accuracy of the portrait by comparing it with scholarly accounts. To what extent are Gandhi's complexities simplified? To what extent is the portrait intended for a "Western" audience? (Examine, for instance, the portraits of Gandhi's wife and their marriage, and the references to hell and to conceptions of "salvation.") To what extent does it provide a polemical argument which is essentially pro-Indian and anti-Muslim? (Examine the points raised in Richard Greiner's review of the film.)

9. To what extent did post-independence leaders in India follow Gandhi's example in political philosophy? In economic development? In cultural issues? What factors contributed to the departure from the Gandhian vision of India?

10. What are the political strengths of the satyagraha campaigns? Which were the most successful? Which were the most dangerous? Why?

11. What were their weaknesses? Do they reveal specific areas of contradiction or naivete in Gandhi's political philosophy? To what degree do they reflect ideas prominent in Hindu or Jain philosophy?

12. Characterize Gandhi's contributions to modern India. Is his impact principally in the area of government and politics or in personal and spiritual lives of the Indian peoples?

13. Examine how Gandhi is viewed in the United States. What contradictions in his character and philosophy tend to be ignored? Why? What traits in his personality and example are most admired?

14. To what extent could Gandhi's ideas about ahimsa and satyagraha be employed in political movements in the United States? Discuss the limitations of their effectiveness and their potential strengths.

EVALUATION

The methods of evaluation are essentially the same as for the Thoreau section--a combination of factual tests to cover reading, oral presentations and discussions, and writing assignments. Practically any of the study questions offered above could form the basis of an essay assignment. The massive body of information concerning Gandhi's life, his writings, and his lasting impact upon contemporary India and the West would make him an appropriate subject for longer writing assignments and research projects, should studies of this length be preferred.

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SECTION III
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

KING: "Letter from Birmingham Jail"

The non-violent campaign students today are most likely to be familiar with is that of Martin Luther King, Jr. to secure civil rights for African-Americans during the nineteen fifties and sixties. This campaign culminated in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Although students will be familiar with Dr. King and with his campaigns in general, they may not be aware of the impact which "Resistance to Civil Government" and Gandhi's writings had upon his thinking and the planning of his campaign strategies. As a central document in the unit, King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" has been chosen because of its echoes of both Thoreau and Gandhi, its powerful writing style, and the dramatic circumstances of its composition and reception.

Dr. King's debt to Gandhi is large and readily acknowledged. The civil rights leader even made a kind of pilgrimage to India in February and March of 1959 at the invitation of Prime Minister Nehru. In "My Trip to the Land of Gandhi," King describes how moved he had been by visiting the Raj Ghat in New Delhi and by interviewing Gandhi's associates and relatives. No doubt he also had a practical intention of evaluating the lasting impact of Gandhi's legacy and learning how to adapt the Indian independence campaigns for American purposes.

Students are usually highly motivated during this portion of the study, since Dr. King's significance continues to be felt in the United States. Although minority students are most acutely interested, Dr. King's life, the circumstances of his death, and the rhetorical power of his writings and speeches exert a powerful impact upon students of various races, religions, and economic backgrounds.

"Letter from Birmingham Jail" provides the centerpiece of this section, but students should be encouraged to read widely among Dr. King's writings and to view documentaries of the campaigns, especially those with portions of his speeches. The multi-part series produced by PBS entitled Eyes on the Prize is a particularly valuable overview of the struggle for civil rights. Should time restraints prohibit viewing of the series as a whole, students my be assigned relevant reading assignments from the liberally illustrated volume which accompanied the video series.

Though Dr. King's unique contributions to the doctrine of non-violent protest are central, his indebtedness to the writings of Thoreau and Gandhi are important in linking this section of study to those which preceded it.

STRATEGIES

Before the writings of Dr. King are assigned, students should become acquainted with the realities of racial segregation in the United States; this historical background is required for two purposes: to provide a context for Dr. King's civil resistance campaigns and to illustrate to extent to which the goals of the movement have been realized, in large measure as a result of his efforts. As in the Thoreau study, a brief overview can be gained from assignments in the students' American history textbooks, though Eyes on the Prize and Parting the Waters are both excellent sources for establishing the historical context of Dr. King's leadership and its impact upon civil rights legislation.

Next, King's Strive Toward Freedom presents how closely King modelled his civil-resistance campaigns upon the principles of satyagraha. Have a couple of students offer a presentation on the volume, emphasizing King's references to Thoreau and to Gandhi and how his thinking was influenced by their lives and writings.

Students should then read King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail" along with the relevant portions of Eyes on the Prize which explain the motivations for this particular essay and Dr. King's personal jeopardy while imprisoned. (If the videotapes are available, the relevant portions, including documentary footage of how the police attacked the non-violent protestors, make a stronger impact than printed descriptions of the events.) The passages in which King distinguishes between just and unjust laws should be connected with "Civil Disobedience"; passages which emphasize non-violence and the stages of the passive resistance campaign should be traced to relevant portions of Satyagraha in South Africa and Hind Swaraj.

Since the essay is such an effective polemic, students should also be encouraged to examine the literary devices which contribute to its rhetorical effectiveness and persuasive power. These devices include allusion, symbolism, alliteration, parallelism, and repetition. In particular, students should discuss why King selects the figures he mentions from religious and political history and why he avoids mentioning Thoreau and Gandhi by name, despite the essay's clear debts to their writings.

Students should then place the essay into the larger context of the civil-rights campaign and evaluate the successes of the movement as a whole. Should more contemporary applications of King's ideas be desired, students may make presentations concerning the current debates on affirmative action, common in news articles over the past two years.

Many witnesses of the civil rights campaigns and participants in them survive. Guest speakers who can provide first-hand accounts of the struggles may be invited to bring these historical events to life for the students.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What aspects in American culture and American law did Dr. King and his followers object to? Trace the historical forces which gave rise to these objections. Compare and contrast them with the circumstances which inspired Gandhi's civil resistance campaigns.

2. How was King influenced by the examples of Thoreau and Gandhi, according to his own account in Strive Toward Freedom? To what extent does he depart from their examples? What factors influence those departures? (Examine especially the religious context of Dr. King's movement, and contrast it with the religious obligations in Gandhi's Indian campaigns.)

3. What circumstances led to Dr. King's arrest in Birmingham on Easter weekend, 1963? What specifically provoked the composition of the "Letter from Birmingham Jail"?

4. To what extent can the influence of Thoreau and of Gandhi be found in King's essay? Why are those influences not specifically acknowledged?

5. To what extent does Dr. King depart from Gandhi's requirements for the satyagraha movements? Which circumstances demand those departures?

6. For what audience was Dr. King's essay intended? How are the literary and persuasive devices he employs related to that intended audience?

7. Examine how the Birmingham experience fits into the context of Dr. King's campaigns to secure civil rights for African-Americans. To what extent do the later campaigns dwell upon the government's fear of violence?

8. What do modern campaigns to empower minority groups or to change government policies owe to Dr. King's example and to his writings? Explore the connections between the civil rights movement and contemporary examples taken from television and news magazines.

EVALUATION

The methods of evaluation for this section are essentially the same as those suggested for the two preceding units, a combination of discussion, factual testing, oral presentations, and essays in short and longer formats.

SOURCES

Branch, Taylor. Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954-63. New York: Touchstone, 1988. A Pulitzer-Prize winning history of the civil rights campaign which provides historical context and includes a detailed examination of the impact of both Thoreau and Gandhi upon Dr. King's philosophy of political action and non-violent resistance.

King, Martin Luther, Jr. Stride Toward Freedom: The Montgomery Story. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986. Dr. King's account of the Montgomery bus boycott, the first of the large-scale civil rights movements which employ Gandhi's ideas about passive resistance. Contains references to both Thoreau and Gandhi.

----------. A Testament of Hope: The Essential Writings. Ed. James Melvin Washington. San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986. Contains the text of the "Letter from Birmingham Jail" along with other writings of Dr. King, including "My Trip to the Land of Gandhi," written for Ebony magazine in 1959.

Williams, Juan. Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965. New York: Viking, 1987. The companion volume to the PBS video series, its many illustrations may be used if the video tapes are not available.

SECTION IV
THE DALAI LAMA

THE DALAI LAMA: Freedom in Exile

The last section of this curriculum guide returns to the area of the world where Gandhi's life and example are most keenly felt: Central Asia. His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama of Tibet lives with his government in exile in Dharamsala, India, in the foothills of the Himalayan Mountains. Since the Dalai Lama received the 1989 Nobel Prize for Peace (following the example of Martin Luther King, Jr., who received the award in 1964), he has focused attention upon the plight of the Tibetan community living in exile from a harsh Chinese invasion in 1959. His many statements urging a non-violent resolution of this conflict owe much to Gandhi's example, as His Holiness has acknowledged on many occasions.

Gandhi's portrait is prominently featured along with the Dalai Lama's in many locations in India where Tibetans live and work. Part of the reason is without doubt the delicate political situation of the exile communities in India, though part is also genuine admiration of the Mahatma's example of ahimsa, a central feature of both Hinduism and Buddhism. The Tibetans may also see in Gandhi's eventual success in expelling the British Raj the promise of a happy resolution to their own dilemma.

This unit is designed to bring the ideas of civil resistance and non-violent adherence to conscience into the contemporary world: the Tibetan struggle is currently at its height: in the non-violent leadership of the Dalai Lama in summoning world opinion to favor the Tibetan cause; in frequent uprisings in Tibetan cities; and in occasional violent insurgencies in Western Tibet. Hence, this section provides opportunities for students to do research in contemporary sources and even to become involved themselves, should they be interested in contributing to such a cause. (The International Campaign for Tibet, for instance, is planning to stage protests against the Chinese occupation in cities around the world to coincide with the release of the film Seven Years in Tibet.)

The unique circumstances of the Tibetan campaign also provide opportunities to examine the strengths and weaknesses of satyagraha movements against oppressive regimes of overwhelming power and unsympathetic philosophical systems. (Gandhi and King mounted their struggles against peoples who pledged themselves to Christian principles and the rule of law, neither of which characterizes the current leadership of China.)

Though reading assignments may be made from the writings and speeches of the Dalai Lama, this unit can be approached largely through considerations of news articles, reports, and documentaries. The current relevance of these ideas--how they are tested in the crucible of modern political struggles--should do a great deal to spur the students' interest and motivation.

STRATEGIES

A film documentary of the life of the Dalai Lama and of the current plight of Tibet would provide the most effective introduction to this portion of the study. Many such documentaries are available, though the ones concerned with the Dalai Lama personally tend toward a hagiographic approach. This approach in itself could provide the foundation of interesting comparisons with Gandhi and King. The PBS series Frontline has produced two extensive documentaries about the current plight of the Tibetan people under Chinese rule. The overview provided by documentaries may be fleshed out by published sources, of which the Dalai Lama's own accounts of the political struggle he leads and John F. Avedon's In Exile from the Land of Snows should be vital resources.

After students have a basic understanding of the Tibetan dilemma and the role of the Dalai Lama in Tibetan culture, individual aspects of the struggle could be assigned for research and oral presentations. The following topics should prove fruitful:

The Dalai Lama's travels as spokesman for Tibet

The award of the 1989 Nobel Peace Prize and Chinese reactions to the citation

The controversy concerning the recognition of the Panchen Lama

The Chinese migration into Tibet

Relations between the Tibetan exile community and the Indian government

The support given the Tibetan cause among celebrities in the United States, particularly in Hollywood

The Periodical Guide to literature should direct students to a plethora of recent articles concerning each of these topics. Many Internet web sites will also offer the very latest information.

Finally, students should read portions of the Dalai Lama's Autobiography and his prominent speeches, such as his Nobel Prize address, to recognize the extent of His Holiness's indebtedness to Gandhi's example as a writer and politician. Students should discuss the extent to which the Tibetan struggle can make effective use of satyagraha techniques and the limitations posed by geography and the economic and strategic importance of China.

In conclusion, this portion of the study provides summary examinations of the continuing impact of the lives and writings of Thoreau, Gandhi, and King in the modern world.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. To what extent is the struggle for Tibetan liberation similar to the struggles undertaken by Gandhi and by King? To what extent are there differences?

2. Trace influences of Gandhi on the style and emphasis of the Dalai Lama's leadership of the struggle. Look for references to Gandhi in the Dalai Lama's writings and public statements, particularly those delivered in India. Why would he emphasize connections to Gandhi for an Indian audience?

3. Examine the importance of publicity in the success of the Tibetan campaign. To what extent did Gandhi cultivate public recognition? What symbols have both leaders employed?

4. Suggest which strategies inherited from Thoreau, Gandhi, and King would be most useful in addressing the specific issues the Dalai Lama has identified as central to his struggle against China. What are the limitations of these strategies for the Tibetan situation? What are the strengths?

EVALUATION

In addition to the suggestions made concerning the earlier units, many instructors will wish to construct evaluation instruments covering all four sections. Writing assignments which compare/contrast differing approaches to civil resistance would be appropriate as would topics which trace a single idea through all four figures. Discussion tests measuring the students' grasp of salient characteristics of each movement, their foundations, and their levels of success (to date) may also prove valuable in recognizing the extent of the students' mastery of material. Should presentations be preferred, any of the suggested topics could be considered in oral format and evaluated in that form.

SOURCES

Avedon, John F. In Exile from the Land of Snow. New York: Vintage Books, 1985. An historical account of Tibetan culture and of the brutalities of the Chinese occupation.

Dalai Lama. "Communist China and Human Rights." Vital Speeches (May 1, 1997): 423-24. A speech delivered on the thirty-eighth anniversary of the Tibetan national uprising, Dharamsala, India, on March 10, 1997.

----------. Freedom in Exile: The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama. Calcutta: Rupa Company, 1993. The Dalai Lama's account of his life and the struggle of the people he leads. Contains a reference to Gandhi's principles of nonviolence and the Dalai Lama's reverence for his example of political activism.

Kriese, Kai. Tenzin Gyatso, The Dalai Lama. New York: Chelsea House, 1989. A hagiography of the Dalai Lama, amply illustrated and intended for an audience of young adults.

Note: Many contemporary and popular periodicals contain examinations of the plight of the Tibetan people and the Dalai Lama's leadership. For instance, in mid-October of 1997, both Time and Newsweek included long articles on Tibet and His Holiness in conjunction with the release of the film Seven Years in Tibet.

Dr. David Paul Ragan
Chair, English Department
Hammond School
854 Galway Lane
Columbia, SC 29209
803-776-0295
e-Mail: dpragan@juno.com